

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Historic Resources of Morganton

XX MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Quaker Meadows Cemetery

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

off Highway 126 northwest of downtown Morganton

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Morganton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

X VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

COUNTY

Burke

CODE

023

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- NA IN PROCESS
- NA BEING CONSIDERED

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER cemetery

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Quaker Meadows Cemetery, Inc. % Miss Eunice W. Ervin

STREET & NUMBER

204 Ervin Road

CITY, TOWN

Morganton

STATE

North Carolina 28655

NA VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Burke County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

South Green Street

CITY, TOWN

Morganton

STATE

North Carolina 28655

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Suzanne Pickens Wylie

ORGANIZATION

Preservation Consultant

DATE

July 31, 1986

STREET & NUMBER

3301-T Park Road

TELEPHONE

(704) 527-1610

CITY OR TOWN

Charlotte

STATE

North Carolina 28209

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

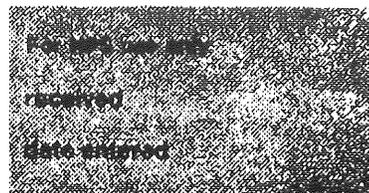
Quaker Meadows Cemetery is located on a hill overlooking the Quaker Meadows valley immediately adjacent to the Morganton city limits. Fifty-nine graves have been identified dating between 1767 and 1879. Fifty-three of these are still marked by stones. It is probable there are other unmarked graves existing within the confines of the cemetery that date from the period of significance. The boundaries of this nomination include the cemetery only and exclude the modern fence surrounding the plot and the parking area. The cemetery was restored in 1979-80, the ground was cleared and the gravestones repaired and reset in their original locations. Quaker Meadows is today maintained under the auspices of the nonprofit Quaker Meadows Cemetery organization. Although cemeteries are not normally eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Quaker Meadows Cemetery is eligible as the earliest identified site associated with white settlement in western North Carolina.

The earliest marked grave in the cemetery is that of David McDowell who died in 1767. David was the two-year-old grandson of Joseph McDowell, the first permanent white settler in the area. McDowell received a land grant for property in the Quaker Meadows valley as early as 1749, and homesteaded his claim until about 1751 when he returned to Virginia. About 1765, he came home to Quaker Meadows with members of his family and built a fortified residence in the valley. When young David died, his resting place was chosen on a hill overlooking his grandfather's land. His grave is marked by a well-weathered gravestone, shaped of local rock with a rounded beveled top. The stone was likely fashioned by a local craftsman, probably the same one who made the stones for Hugh and Joseph McDowell. These three earliest stones are much alike.

Later stones feature more sophisticated craftsmanship and were probably imported from the east. After Burke County was formed in 1777 and Morganton established in 1784, supply lines to the east, particularly to Charleston, were more reliable. It is possible that some of the stones are of a later period than the interments they mark, simply because of the distance and time involved in importing a stone. It is believed, however, that with the possible exception of one stone, the markers are of the same general time period as the graves they mark. This suggests a relatively high level of sophistication in the craftsmanship of the stones compatible with the fact that the occupants of the cemetery are almost members of Morganton's most prominent families. Alexander Erwin's stone is believed to date much later than his 1830 death, perhaps as late as the 1870s. It may be a replacement stone or it may have been erected by descendants to identify a previously unmarked grave.

Many of the earlier stones are simply shaped, some with incised pediments, with biblical sentiments carved beneath the lifespan statistics. Others feature elaborately shaped tops without additional ornamentation. Some of the more ornamental stones incorporate conventional funerary motifs from their respective periods. Col. David Tate's and David Tate, Sr.'s stones both feature the motifs of blossoms severed from their stems. Sarah Erwin's 1785 stone is particularly sophisticated for that early time, featuring a shaped top and a winged death motif. Jane Fleming's 1860 stone features a "final curtain call" design.

(See continuation sheet)

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Quaker Meadows Cemetery:

Continuation sheet

Description

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There is a great deal of similarity in the designs of stones within family groups. Those of the seven members of the Greenlee family are of two basic designs, those of four members of the McDowell family are very similar as are those of Margaret and William Butler.

There are basically three long, slightly irregular rows of gravestones and then scattered clusters of stones and single graves. All of the stones are oriented east-northeast. There is no indication the cemetery had ever been landscaped. The cemetery is surrounded by woods which shelter it from what development has taken place. One residence is adjacent to the parking area, but screened from view. When the cemetery was restored, a large brick and iron fence was placed around the plot, a brick walk laid around the perimeter, and a parking area graded. The fence and parking area are not included in this nomination, the boundaries enclose only the area within the fence which includes the brick walk and the graves.

Resources Count: 1 Site

8 SIGNIFICANCE

_____ NATIONAL XX STATE _____ LOCAL

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE (Funerary)
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

ca. 1767-ca. 1879

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

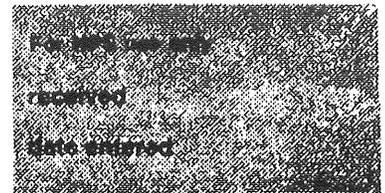
NA

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

See continuation sheet

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

See continuation sheet

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Continuation sheet

Significance

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

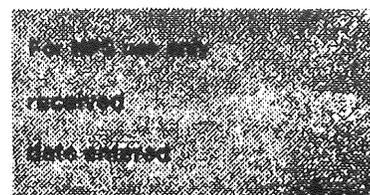
Quaker Meadows Cemetery is located on top of a hill overlooking the Quaker Meadows area, northwest of downtown Morganton off State Road 1216. The cemetery is immediately adjacent to the Morganton city limits, but is included in this nomination because it is the earliest identified above-ground resource associated with the settlement of the area which led to the formation of Burke County and the founding of Morganton. Quaker Meadows Cemetery was utilized from 1767 to about 1879. Sixty-one graves have been identified, fifty-six are marked by gravestones bearing death dates from 1767 to 1879. It is possible that other unmarked graves are within the perimeters of the cemetery. The earliest marked grave in the cemetery is that of David McDowell who died in 1767. David was the grandson of Joseph McDowell, the first permanent white settler in the area, whose grant included a large amount of land in the Quaker Meadows valley. Burke County's next earliest resource is the present Quaker Meadows House, built ca. 1812, not far from the cemetery. No historic resource earlier than Quaker Meadows Cemetery has yet been identified in the counties to the west. Since the foothills of Burke County around Morganton formed the western frontier for a length of time, it is unlikely that any other comparable above-ground resources exist. In addition to its significance in Exploration and Settlement, the cemetery contains several notable examples of gravestone design. Considering the distance from Morganton to a source of sophisticated funerary art, the stones are unusually good. Standard funerary motifs appear including a winged death, weeping willows, closing curtains, and blossoms severed from their stem. More simple stones feature shaped tops and incised designs. Two of the stones are signed, one of these is the stone of John Gray Bynum which is the only flat, in-ground stone in the cemetery. The occupants of the cemetery are members of the most prominent families in Morganton including the McDowells, Tates, Erwins, Greenlees, and Flemings. Quaker Meadows was a semi-public cemetery used by families related to, or otherwise closely tied to, the McDowell family.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Quaker Meadows Cemetery is significant as the earliest known above-ground resource associated with the exploration and permanent settlement of Western North Carolina. Since Burke County formed the edge of the frontier for some time, it is unlikely any earlier above-ground resources exist in the counties to the west.
- C. The cemetery is significant in its local context for the quality and variety of its late-eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century funerary art.

CRITERIA EXCEPTION

- D. Although cemeteries are not usually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, Quaker Meadows Cemetery is an exception to the criteria because its eligibility rests on its place as the earliest identified above-ground resource associated with permanent white settlement in Western North Carolina. In addition, the cemetery contains significant funerary art.

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Quaker Meadows Cemetery:

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Quaker Meadows Cemetery, utilized from 1767 to 1878, is significant as the earliest identified above-ground resource associated with white settlement in western North Carolina. In addition, the cemetery contains the grave of Joseph McDowell, the earliest white settler in the western part of the state. It is the only identified resource associated with his contributions to the area. The early gravestones at Quaker Meadows are also notable. Though simple, they are substantial and seem to be unusually sophisticated for an area as remote as Burke County in this early period.

The earliest grave at Quaker Meadows is that of David McDowell, infant grandson of Joseph McDowell, who died in 1767. Joseph McDowell settled at Quaker Meadows permanently about 1765. He came to the Morganton area from Virginia as early as 1749 and took a land grant for property in the Quaker Meadows area of what would become Burke County. He homesteaded his claim until about 1751 and then returned to Virginia. McDowell came back to North Carolina in 1765 and had with him several members of his family. David McDowell was born in 1765 and if he were born at Quaker Meadows, he is likely one of the first white children born in the western frontier.

The site chosen for David McDowell's grave was a hill overlooking his grandfather's property. It likely also overlooked Fort McDowell, Joseph's fortified residence, the location of which has not been identified. By 1777, the year Burke County was formed, the graves of Hugh McDowell (1772) and of Joseph McDowell, the pioneer (1775) had been laid in Quaker Meadows Cemetery. As early as 1785, just one year after Morganton was founded, a grave was added to the cemetery, that of Sarah Robinson Erwin, who was not a member of the immediate McDowell family. The presence of numerous other graves of members of families close to or connected to the McDowells, but not of the immediate family, indicate that the cemetery was a sort of quasi-public burial ground for the elite of the frontier society. Silas McDowell identifies the cemetery as the public burying ground in 1816.

Graves of particularly prominent citizens include Charles and Joseph McDowell. These sons of Joseph McDowell were Revolutionary War officers and played a crucial role in organizing troops that joined Daniel Morgan at the Battle of Kings Mountain. The forces gathered near the cemetery at Charles McDowell's Quaker Meadows Plantation. General John Gray Bynum, Revolutionary War heroine Grace Greenlee McDowell, and Col. Alexander Erwin of Bellevue are other notable burials at Quaker Meadows, along with numerous other members of the Tate, Greenlee, and McDowell families.¹²⁶

Burke County's next oldest resource is the Quaker Meadows Plantation house built in 1812 by Charles McDowell. No historic resources earlier than Quaker Meadows Cemetery have been identified in the counties to the west. Since the foothills of Burke County around Morganton formed the western frontier for a length of time, it is unlikely that any other comparable resources exist.

(For footnotes, see Cover Form, Item 9.)

See continuation sheet

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Cover Form, Section 9.

Little, Margaret Ruth. "Sticks and Stones: A Profile of North Carolina Gravemarkers through Three Centuries." Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1984.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately .83 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	4 3,4 7,6,0	3,9 5,6 4,5,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Quaker Meadows Cemetery National Register nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying Burke County Tax Map #7-64 drawn on a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The boundary includes the entire area believed to include unmarked graves as well as all the marked graves. The boundary runs just inside the modern fence and does not include the fence.

